

LEMBECK AND BETZ EAGLE BREWERY,
~~ORIGINAL BREW HOUSE~~
172-178 Ninth Street
Jersey City
Hudson County
New Jersey

HAER No. NJ-113-A

HAER
NJ
9-JERCI,
20A-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD
National Park Service
Philadelphia Support Office
U.S. Custom House
200 Chestnut Street
Philadelphia, PA 19106

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LOCATION: 172-178 Ninth Street, Jersey City, Hudson County, New Jersey. USGS Jersey City, NJ Quadrangle, UTM Coordinates: 18.580960.4508840

DATES OF CONSTRUCTION: 1868-1869; enlarged 1870; altered 1920

BUILDER: Unknown

PRESENT OWNER: City of Jersey City, New Jersey

PRESENT USE: Vacant and abandoned storage buildings

SIGNIFICANCE: The Lembeck & Betz Eagle Brewery Original Brew House was the first building in the complex and is a representative example of late nineteenth-century industrial architecture associated with brewing.

PROJECT INFORMATION: The Lembeck & Betz Eagle Brewery Original Brew House was recorded in October 1996 by the Cultural Resource Group of Louis Berger & Associates, Inc., East Orange, New Jersey, for the Jersey City Redevelopment Agency. The recordation was undertaken pursuant to the stipulations of the New Jersey Historic Sites Council Resolution No. 544-95, dated May 17, 1994, responding to the city of Jersey City's request to demolish the complex. Project personnel included Richard M. Casella, Senior Architectural Historian, and Rob Tucher, Senior Photographer.

DESCRIPTION

The Original Brew House building consists of three attached late nineteenth-century brick industrial buildings with flat roofs, brick and stone foundations, and decorative Italianate detailing in the brickwork, especially around windows and door openings. The east and center sections are five stories; the west section is seven stories. The floors and roof are carried by a combination of the load-bearing exterior brick walls and cast-iron, concrete-encased steel and reinforced-concrete columns, beams, and load-bearing walls. Floor systems include flat reinforced-concrete slabs, flat reinforced slabs cast over hollow clay tile form work left in place between steel girders, and concrete cast over arched corrugated sheet-steel form work left in place between steel girders.

The facade of the building is divided vertically by brick pilasters which separate the window bays, and horizontally by a corbeled-brick belt course at the roof level and another across the first floor at the level of the door head jambs. A parapet wall tops the center and east sections of the building. The center section features a large main entrance, now boarded up, surrounded by a heavy semicircular brick bonded arch which protrudes from the wall and extends down to the threshold. Windows were 2/2, set in pairs in segmentally-arched openings surmounted with a single segmentally-arched corbeled-brick hood. The windows of the third, fourth, and fifth floors are bricked closed. The windows on the west section are identical except for the top two floors, where the openings are rectangular with no brick detailing. The east section features an assortment of window openings; two of the second-floor windows retain their original sash, which consist of 2/2 wooden sash, paired and surmounted with a single segmentally-arched corbeled-brick hood. The third- and fourth-floor windows were set singly in segmentally-arched openings with corresponding hoods. The fifth-floor windows are single and shorter than the others, with deeply corbeled semicircular hoods.

A concrete loading platform runs across the front of the building, extending out about 10 feet. A corrugated metal canopy extending over the platform is attached to the building at the second-floor level, hung with metal suspender rods and steel beams. Only a portion of the awning remains across the east section of the building.

The rear walls of the building have been partially demolished, leaving the building open at the first- and second-floor levels. Window openings are rectangular, devoid of any detailing, and irregularly placed. The west side of the building adjoins the later Second Brew House (HAER No. NJ-113-B); the east side of the building adjoins the later Lager Brew House (HAER No. NJ-113-C).

HISTORICAL INFORMATION

The Original Brew House is the oldest part of the brewery complex. The western section of the building at 176 Ninth Street was built in 1868 and opened in 1869 as the Lembeck & Betz Eagle Steam Ale Brewery. This building was enlarged beginning in 1870 with an addition to the east, which when completed tripled the size of the building. The variations in fenestration and its detailing suggest that the additions were completed at different times; however, this was not confirmed. A rear addition was also added sometime during the nineteenth century. In 1893, in addition to brewing vats and machinery, the building housed two ice machines which turned out 50 tons of ice per day.

In 1920, with the imposition of Prohibition, the owners converted the plant to a cold storage facility. Two stories and an elevator were added to 176 Ninth Street, a bracketed cornice at the second-floor level was removed and the metal awning installed, and the concrete loading platform was built. Also at that time, windows were infilled with brick, and additional ground-floor door openings were cut in or created from window openings. Cork insulation was applied to many of the interior walls and covered with a cement-based plaster. The building, along with the others in the complex, was operated as the New Jersey Refrigeration Company and then as National Cold Storage until some time in the 1960s or 1970s, and has remained vacant since. The city of Jersey City acquired the building in 1979 through tax foreclosure.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

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